



# THE VALLEY PATRIOT

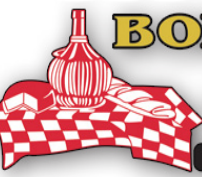
"Congress shall make no law..."

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## Expanding Access to Adoption in MA

### Local Police Chiefs Say Merrimack Valley Bucks National Trend

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## VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

### Still Serving; US Air Force Veteran John MacDonald

John Cuddy

VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

This month is a rare, second interview with a local Veteran, first interviewed by our editor Tom Duggan in October of 2016. Since that time, US Air Force Veteran John MacDonald, has been very busy, assisting Veterans throughout the Merrimack Valley and the United States.

Had a meeting with the newly elected Lowell American Legion Post

87 Commander John MacDonald over breakfast this month, at the "Broken Yolk Grill" in Pelham, New Hampshire. (Get the Lobster Eggs Benedict) Our breakfast led to a discussion on the needs of the Merrimack Valley's Veterans. We discussed what is being done, and more importantly, what needs to be done, to meet our Veteran's needs. A Lowell resident, with two daughters in college, John MacDonald first served our country as a US Air Force Airman,

and firefighter. Now, he is widely known for his tremendous work helping our Veterans in the Merrimack Valley and around the country as well.

John MacDonald enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1989 and was initially stationed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona. A year later he would find himself deployed to Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield. Senior Airman MacDonald was stationed at King Khalid Military City, about 20 miles from Saudi Arabia's border with Kuwait, and just a few miles from the infamous "highway to hell", the result of the US air attack during Desert Storm. While serving in the Middle East, he was part of a firefighting unit tasked with saving and retrieving crashed American/ Allied aircraft and pilots as they lifted off and landed from the base. Within the first month or two of arriving in the country, Senior Airman MacDonald's unit was awarded the best fire department in Air Force.

All the Iraqi and foreign prisoners of war, captured by Allied Forces, were brought to this base, and held until a final determination could be made on their status, and their culpability concerning war crimes. John MacDonald said that his base supported both US Air Force aircraft and a US Air Force Surgical Hospital. MacDonald told me that Iraqi SCUD missiles were fired at his base, and recounted how he was eating lunch one afternoon, when he saw a PATRIOT



missile take out one of the Iraqi SCUDS fired on US Troops.

John MacDonald is one of the original board members of Veterans Assisting Veterans. One of the first projects this group organized, was an official "Welcome Home" concert for Vietnam Veterans at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium.

Veterans Assisting Veterans, now commonly referred to as the "VAV," is a group of veterans who volunteer their time to assist their fellow veterans. John MacDonald said he became involved because our veterans today are "not being treated much better by our federal

HERO: PAGE 14



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# Public Schools Must Stop Interfering with Student Socialization

Earlier this month, some genius in the Methuen Public Schools decided to cancel Valentine’s Day and replace it with “Spirit Day” where the teachers and administrators would indoctrinate children about “friendship and caring.”

After being publicly humiliated on Facebook by Methuen Councilor D.J. Bearegard, however, school administrators changed their tune, sending home a letter to parents saying that students would be “allowed” to exchange Valentine’s Day cards, but only if they “bring one for everybody.”

They also stated that Valentine’s Day and “Spirit Day” would now be combined, because public school educators just can’t help but involve

themselves in the way children socially interact.

This may seem like a small issue but it’s not. This one act by the Methuen Schools is a perfect example of what is wrong with our public schools today.

Instead of simply doing the job we pay them to do, (teach Math, English, History, and Science) teachers unions and administrators think their job is to control all social interactions among the kids under their control.

It’s not. And, it’s time for parents and school board members to say enough is enough.

Public school teachers and administrators can barely educate kids in the subjects they need to get a real job and function in society. They certainly

shouldn’t be re-defining holidays, dictating how kids can celebrate a holiday, or mandating any kind of forced “inclusion.”

“Inclusion” and other highly subjective political views have no place in public schools. Yet, left to their own devices, public school officials would spend 8 hours a day indoctrinating kids to hate America, see everything through the lens of race, and brainwash kids to become social justice warriors.

If Councilor Bearegard had not publicly shamed the Methuen School Administration, they would have succeeded in replacing Valentine’s Day (a day for ROMANCE) with “Spirit Day” which is a day for... well, whatever the teachers’ unions and administrators

want it to be.

Why can’t our school leaders just back off and let kids do what they want to do?

Because they don’t have to, most of the time nobody calls them out for this kind of garbage.

Parents stay passive and very few politicians have the courage to stand up to the social dictates of our school “leaders.”

Kudos to Councilor DJ Bearegard for standing alone and calling it out while everyone else just went along and said nothing.

Let’s hope that his efforts will inspire other elected officials to speak out when political correctness runs amok within our local government. ◇

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## From the Desk of Representative Marcos Devers

### Fighting for Tennant Rights, Transportation Needs, and Voting Rights

January was a big month for Lawrence State Representative Marcos Devers’ office.

It began with the hiring of a new legislative aide, who will handle the constituent services role in the office. With a full staff, Representative Devers’ office assisted five new Lawrence residents with issues this month in addition to over 2 dozen open cases from 2021. The hope is that with a full staff, this capacity will increase drastically in 2022. Representative Devers can be contacted at [marcos.devers@mahouse.gov](mailto:marcos.devers@mahouse.gov) for any questions or problems.

In legislative news, Representative Devers co-sponsored eleven bills this month, including the following:

H.1378 (An Act enabling local options for tenant protections) which would create tenant and foreclosure protections as well as provide municipalities the option to remove prohibitions against rent control

H.1378 protects tenant rights by providing municipalities with a variety of flexible options to help address the Commonwealth’s housing emergency in a locally appropriate manner. These options include: establishing distinct anti-displacement zones ; providing eviction protections for tenants, with



exceptions for cases in which the courts find just cause for the eviction; requiring landlords to provide additional information to tenants when issuing a notice to quit for nonpayment of rent, this additional documentation includes rental assistance program information, applicable trial court rules, relevant state and federal restrictions, and more; creating protections from immediate rent increases; regulating the payment of deposits and non-refundable move-in fees for tenants.

H.273 (An Act establishing an Office of Youth Development), which would

establish a state-wide office of youth development to coordinate research-backed programs and activities for the Commonwealth’s youth population, with an emphasis on anti-violent and anti-gang behaviors, positive social behaviors, improving education results, job opportunities / career and employment options, community building, the performing and creative arts, and more.

H.3413 (An Act to increase regional transit accessibility in the Commonwealth), which directly addresses the need for increased and

predictable funding for RTA operations as well as the need for increased and expanded RTA service to better accommodate residents.

Representative Devers also participated in a few very important House votes this month:

Voted yes on H.4340, which provides \$30 million to expand COVID testing sites and \$25 million for masks for students and teachers in elementary and secondary school districts. The House passed this bill with bipartisan support.

Voted yes on H.4359, An Act fostering voter opportunities, trust, equity, and security. This bill makes vote-by-mail and expanded early voting permanent in the Commonwealth, stops jail-based disenfranchisement (better voting access for incarcerated folks who have the right to vote), and more. The House passed the bill.

As Vice Chair for the Joint Committee on Transportation, Representative Devers attended four committee hearings in January. He also was honored to be in attendance for the inauguration ceremony for the Lawrence city council, the School Board, and the Lawrence Tech School Board. He was also present for Governor Baker’s State of the Commonwealth Address. ◇



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# Mayor Brian DePena’s State of the City Address

Council President Marc LaPlante, Council Vice-President Estela Reyes, and members of the Lawrence City Council, City Clerk Diane LeBlanc, city officials present both here and through virtual media, and my fellow Lawrencians, good evening.

My gratitude to GOD, my wife Dilenny DePeña, my family, as well to the whole team at the Council Chamber that makes this event possible, and so many other things as well. We deeply appreciate our longtime partnership.

And to everyone here, or watching online or reading or watching this later, good evening and welcome to the State of the City address.

As your Mayor, I stand before you to present the State of the City of Lawrence. We still find ourselves in the midst of the pandemic. The difference this year is that we now have widely available COVID19 vaccines that can help most from the worst of the virus that’s disrupted our lives, and I’m proud to say most Lawrencians have chosen to get vaccinated, including many of our city workforce, as well as 71% of eligible Lawrence residents. Eighty-seven percent (87.4%) of adults 30 years or older are fully vaccinated in Lawrence. Every day, city departments responsible with vaccinating people, reach out to our residents (whether by going directly to people’s places of residence or receiving them at numerous vaccinations sites that the city and its partners have throughout the city). To all those who have gotten vaccinated – thank you. Thank you for doing your part to wake us up from this nightmare that has claimed 285 Lawrencians and has sicken more than 35,000 people in our city.

In late December 2021, Governor Charlie Baker sent the City of Lawrence a total of 38,040 free rapid antigen COVID19 test kits for distribution. Least to say that the limited amount of kits were rapidly dispensed. Two weeks ago, I ordered the distribution of 140,000 test kits paid by the city. The city developed a plan to distribute the kits in a manner that prioritizes high risk and disproportionately impacted populations. After surveying demand from agencies that serve these

populations and larger housing sites, distributions began to take place, for safe opening and operations. A general list is available at the Mayor’s Office and a more detailed list is available at the Center, as distributions roll out.

Like the pandemic, none of the challenges that face our city have fast or easy fixes, and all of them are going to take a unified effort to solve. A State of the City address is typically an opportunity to inform you of the city’s accomplishments and give a rosy account of the year ahead. However, the last two years, with the COVID19 virus wreaking havoc, have been anything but typical. As Mayor, and in my first State of the City, I’d love to inform you of the staff’s past year’s many wins on, transportation, fiscal discipline and more -- and to revel the people and organizations who made them happen because we should be proud of them.

But the last two years have left all of us small on patience for cheerful talk. So, tonight is not the time for a typical speech because these are not typical times. Instead, I’m going to focus this address on the most pressing problems our city faces.

Let’s begin with the decades long backlog of critical infrastructure and capital improvements that Lawrence faces and that cannot be put off for any additional amount of time. Two new schools, for our children, are either in the final stages of funding and construction. The buildings will provide a better school to deliver a better quality of education for our children.

For our heroes, a new police station is being designed and soon to be built. As you know, each of these projects will require the city to issue bonds/borrow funds. We have and will borrow and will be fiscal responsible in doing so. A plan is set out and will be communicated shortly to the public through this council’s meeting with specifics. It has been discussed at the Budget & Finance sub-committee last week.

Speaking of funding for capital projects, S&P Global Ratings (“S&P”), a municipal credit rating agency, raised its underlying rating on the City’s general



Lawrence State Representative Marcos Devers with Mayor Biran DePena at the state of the city address.

obligation debt to ‘A+’ with a stable outlook from ‘A’ with a positive outlook. S&P cited the City’s continued positive operations and growing reserve levels as factors leading to the upgrade, as well as ongoing economic development which has translated into healthy tax base growth and allowing for declining property tax rates and increasing levels of unused levy capacity. S&P also cited strong management with good financial policies as a positive credit factor.

Concurrent with this upgrade, S&P affirmed the ‘AA’ enhanced rating with a stable outlook on the City’s general obligation bonds secured by the State Qualified Bond Act local state aid intercept program. As you may know the Municipal Finance Oversight Board approved Lawrence to borrow funds under the state AA rating, allowing for lower interest borrowing. This is great news and deserves the accolade of past administrations discipline in budgeting and spending.

Continuing on funding, as the city’s Chief Administrative & Finance Officer informed most of the elected officials and residents, the \$57 million in ARPA funds that are currently at the council’s prerogative, and is, considered unrestricted funds because of the amount of revenue losses that the city has incurred throughout the pandemic. CAFO Ianello came before the Budget & Finance Committee that is under Chairperson Pavel Payano, with the wishes of the city - which is to release the \$57 million into this year’s current budget as recovered revenue losses and by the end of the fiscal year make that fund free cash. That will make the highest free cash that the city has ever had in the history of Lawrence. Once that is in place, in the coming years, as explained by the CAFO, the city will be able to get a loan for Leahy next year and pay for debt services for a number of years without having to increase taxes for any of the three largest projects the city is going forward building in FY 2023. The people of Lawrence were correct when they voted not to allow the city a 2.5% tax override. It’s not required. State representative Frank Moran made that information, to my team, early last year.

Several smaller initiatives and changes that are ongoing relates to the vision for the city. As urbanization continues to drive growth, Lawrence is becoming more important to business, and more interdependent with business collaborations between organization, and business hold out the promise of significant progress in improving long-term economic growth, and quality of life.

DEPEN: PAGE 21

# Funding for Immediate Pandemic Needs in Our Schools

**Linda Dean Campbell**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

In response to the persistent pandemic challenges, the Massachusetts House of Representatives has passed legislation directing \$55 million toward our most immediate needs. Thankfully, we have passed the peak in terms of our case rate – but case counts remain high in the Merrimack Valley and effective use of resources will help to prevent a resurgence and avoid further strain on our health care system.

At this juncture, we must pay close attention to the needs of our students and teachers – this legislation makes resources available to help keep our students and teachers, and their families, safe. We are also continuing to pursue legislation and resources to address student mental health, another area of critical importance.

The legislation includes:

- \$25 million to establish and expand COVID-19 testing sites and to purchase rapid tests, especially for use in

schools

- \$25 million to purchase and distribute high-quality masks for students, teachers, and staff in our schools
- \$5 million to increase vaccination rates in children ages 5-11, with a focus on communities that have been heavily impacted by the pandemic

Collectively, this funding invests in the solutions we know to work: vaccinations, masks, and testing. Our schools need this support. Once this funding is finalized between the House and Senate, the state will be seeking federal FEMA reimbursements.

The legislation also extends critical policies enacted earlier in the pandemic to ensure safe day-to-day operations, such as authorizing remote town meetings, remote notary services, and remove reverse-mortgage counseling. It also extends liability protections for health care workers who provide care in good faith in line with current rules and guidance.

To our health care workers – words



cannot express our gratitude for the service you have provided to our communities, our Commonwealth, and our nation. We salute you.

To find a vaccination site, visit [www.vaxfinder.mass.gov](http://www.vaxfinder.mass.gov). To find a COVID-19 test location, visit [www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-covid-19-test](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-covid-19-test).

*State Representative Linda Dean Campbell represents the cities of Methuen and Haverhill in the State Legislature. She serves as House Chair of the Joint Committee on Advanced IT, the Internet and Cybersecurity. She can be reached at [Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov](mailto:Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov) or (617) 722-2380. ♦*



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CAMPBELL TO RETIRE AS METHUEN’S STATE REP.

Massachusetts State Representative Linda Dean Campbell has announced that she will not be running for reelection to the 15th Essex District, which currently includes most of Methuen and the Bradford, Ward Hill section of Haverhill. Campbell, an Army Veteran, and paratrooper, served as a Methuen City Councilor for six years before running for State Representative of the 15th Essex District. She will have served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives for 16 years at the conclusion of her eighth term.

RYAN HAMILTON RUNNING FOR STATE REP.

Ryan Hamilton has thrown his hat in the ring for State Representative to replace the outgoing Rep. Linda Campbell who announced she is retiring this year. Hamilton is a former Methuen City Councilor, and is currently an aide to Methuen Mayor Neil Perry. To our knowledge there are no other candidates in this race. The election is this coming November.

\*\*\*

GLCAC OFFERS TAX PREP ASSISTANCE

The Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. will be offering free tax preparation assistance for low- to moderate-income families and individuals.

GLCAC’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program includes a team of IRS-certified volunteers that provides free basic federal and state income tax return preparation to qualified individuals. The program runs from Feb. 1, 2022, through April 15, 2022.


VITA is available to qualifying individuals generally earning \$57,000 or less, persons with disabilities and limited-English-speaking taxpayers.

GLCAC is also seeking volunteers with experience preparing personal income tax returns to work with clients to file their tax returns.

For more information, to make an appointment for tax assistance or to volunteer, please call Edy Lopez at 978-620-4752, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

VITA services will be available Monday through Thursday 5 to 7 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Clients

TOM DUGGAN’S NOTEBOOK



Carbone’s Kitchen held a ribbon cutting on Jan. 27th to reintroduce Carbone’s Kitchen to the community. They have expanded their dining room after taking over the entirety of the space located at 151 South Main St. in Bradford. They now offer more comfortable seating, a private room & seasonal patio, and have expanded service to offer brunch on Sundays from 10-2pm. (L to R) Joseph Bevilacqua, MVCC President/ CEO; Gerald Schivanoni of MV Eats; friend of Carbone’s Kitchen; Mayor James Fiorentini; Kristen Carbone; family of Kristen Carbone and Michael Bevilacqua, Vice President, Merrimack Valley Chamber.

need to provide copies of the following documents:

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- 1099-INT bank interest earned, if applicable
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- Forms 1095 A, B, and C, health coverage statement
- Letter 6419 Advance child tax credit (NEW)
- Letter 6475 Economic impact payments (NEW)

GLCAC is a multi-faceted social services agency that assists more than 32,000 individuals through a range of programs including early childhood education, fuel assistance, WIC nutrition assistance, immigration services, lead poisoning prevention, child abuse prevention, English-language lessons, and consumer protection.

ESSEX HERITAGE’S 2022 PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

The Essex National Heritage Commission (Essex Heritage), in keeping with its long tradition of supporting the region’s unique cultural heritage, announced the start of the 2022 Partnership Grant program cycle, now through February 25th. Over the

next year, the 12 grant recipients will be working to implement a diverse range of educational, interpretive, accessibility and preservation projects throughout Boston’s North Shore and the Merrimack Valley. Any eligible organization is encouraged to apply, the application process has been designed with simplicity in mind and most applications take less than an hour to complete.

WINSTON SAYS!



Methuen should replace Valentine’s Day with “The Festival of Cats”

(SEE EDITORIAL PAGE 2)

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# Former Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan Voted Chair of M .V. Chamber of Commerce

The Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce, the largest business network serving communities in the Merrimack Valley, announces after nearly a decade of strong, visionary and committed leadership, Salvatore Lupoli, has retired from the Board of Directors.

Sal served as Chairman during a trying period, leading the Chamber through the worst recession since the great depression and then working with our members as we faced together the COVID crisis, which hopefully will abate soon. The members of the MV Chamber wish to thank and commend Sal Lupoli for his dedicated leadership and we all wish him well as he continues to expand Lupoli Companies!

The Chamber is pleased to announce that after review and consideration, the Chamber’s Nominating and Executive Committees have voted to elect Michael Sullivan as the new Chairman of the Board. Prior to his election as Chairman of the Board, Michael Sullivan has most recently served as the Committee Chairman of the Chamber’s Education / Workforce Development Committee.

In addition, Michael served two successful terms as Mayor of the City of Lawrence and understands the interaction of business and government. His company, TA Sullivan Insurance and Real Estate, has been a member of the



Chamber for nearly thirty years and is well respected and known throughout the Merrimack Valley.

The Chamber and its members welcome Michael and know he will do well for our members and communities!

For up-to-date information on upcoming MV Chamber events and programs, or to become a member, please see [www.merrimackvalleychamber.com](http://www.merrimackvalleychamber.com)



Mike Sullivan

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

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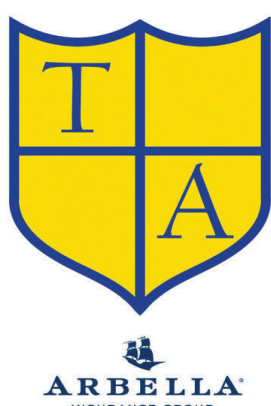
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# Expanding Access to Adoption in Massachusetts

Hello Valley Patriot Readers,

Currently in Massachusetts, there are more than 2,000 children in foster care with a goal of adoption. Adoption waitlists have been booming, with countless children waiting three or more years to be adopted.

All too often standing in the way of individuals and families who want to adopt is an archaic law, implemented in Massachusetts at the beginning of the 20th century, that prevents family members from adopting their younger siblings, nephews or nieces, even when the older family member is independent, stable and can financially support the child.

This old law was put in place with the intention of preventing the potential for inheritance abuse but Massachusetts eventually adopted legal protections, including conservatorships, to prevent this from happening. With the law still on the books, it has had the unintended consequence of creating a significant barrier for adoption.

That is why I am so grateful we in

## IN YOUR CORNER with SENATOR DIZOGLIO

the Massachusetts State Senate recently passed legislation, sponsored by my colleague Senator Joan B. Lovely, to allow appropriate to kin to permanently adopt family members when it is in the child’s best interest.

Right now, guardianships are available for family members. These only, however, provide temporary caregiving support, while adoptions are permanent. We all know how important permanency and kinship are when it comes to our children. They benefit exponentially from the support of stable, nurturing family connections, with family members often able to better weather a child’s behavioral issues, preventing that child from bouncing between multiple foster placements.

Kinship caregivers are often an overlooked solution that can provide reliable permanency for children who have experienced trauma and are at risk for related health and social effects.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has left many of our vulnerable youth without parents, making familial relationships and bonds more important than ever.

We are one of only two states in the entire nation that prohibits adoption by close relatives. Our children deserve to be cared for by the people who know and love them, and this bill helps make that a reality. I am hopeful we can get this important bill to the Governor’s desk as soon as possible and want to thank Senator Lovely for her leadership in introducing the legislation.

If you have any questions on this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me anytime via email at [Dizoglio@masenate.gov](mailto:Dizoglio@masenate.gov) or phone at 978-984-7747.

Yours in service,  
Diana ◇



# Radical Left in Full Retreat

# “Time To Move on... Nearly Everyone Else Has”

**Kenneth Willette**  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

What a 180 degree turn our nation has taken since President Biden was sworn into office and promised the most sweeping liberal agenda since the days of FDR. Republicans were still reeling from the unwarranted guilt by association of the January 6th incursion at the Capitol. As if 75 million voters and thousands of peaceful protestors were solely responsible for the condemnable violence of a few hundred instigators.

Shockingly, many of the same liberals have ignored political violence and attacks against police, private businesses, federal buildings, monuments and even the White House during the summer of 2020. No congressional commission to analyze all political violence.

With Biden’s tacit approval, Radical Leftists rushed in Congress to pass legislation that would have forever altered the constitutional experiment of the greatest nation on earth. Think about the sheer scope of their plans---defund the police; implement Critical Race Theory in our schools; pack the Supreme Court; open the borders and add trillions in permanent spending. Even the climate change funding and mandates would have chilled business development and innovation for decades.

But a funny thing happened on the way to socialism, apology forums and biased commissions, conservatives across the nation woke up with a vengeance. And make no mistake, conservatives are waging a total campaign of victory that would make Grant and Sherman proud.

Bold governors in Florida and Texas first rebelled against lockdowns, which were crushing small businesses and putting middle class workers into poverty.

Now, we find out that lockdowns

had no significant impact in reducing the number of COVID deaths. But as liberals illogically fought for lockdowns, they gladly sought to open our nation’s borders.

Biden’s façade of working for national unity rapidly disappeared when the lies of caged children, the disastrous exit out of Afghanistan, the roar of inflation and profound weakness against archrivals Russia and China convinced us of his sheer duplicity and incompetence.

Biden has been creating dumpster fires every day he spoke. He said all Republicans were racist for supporting voter ID laws.

Yet 80% of Americans apparently are racist, as they support voter ID, and South Africa, a majority black nation, has a two-step registration and verification process to vote. Shame on us for wanting to protect the integrity of the ballot.

Biden shut down the Keystone pipeline construction, limited drilling domestically and questioned fracking methods.

Yet he cried ignorance when gas prices and heating costs soared. He promised to expedite supply chain bottlenecks, but a trip to a nearby Market

Basket will confirm the fallacy of that effort. Escalating crime across the country has temporarily silenced the lunacy associated with the defund the police movement. But liberal legislatures continue to promote smash and grab tactics with weakened criminal penalties.

November Elections cannot come soon enough, as a massive Red Wave will wash away the hypocrisy of the Radical Left. Conservatives are winning at school board meetings, in the courts, in Congress and at state houses.

The Radical Leftist agenda is dying a slow and painful death.

Sweet music to conservatives. ◇

**Duncan Burns**  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

There are now only 12 states with school mask mandates, 13 if New York appeals court ruling stands. Of course, all of these states are run by Democrats who apparently never want mandates to end. This is in light of traditionally Democrat publications (i.e., The Atlantic, NPR) calling for the end of said mask mandates. The real irony here is that in many of these states, like Massachusetts, everything is open, most without mask mandates. Everyone, especially kids, can go to the movies, malls, grocery stores, all mask free, yet politicians, unelected bureaucrats, and so-called “experts” appear to want to mask forever. It took nearly two (2) years for these same people to finally accept “the science” that cloth masks did nearly nothing, but this is what political echo-chambers create, a complete shutdown of discourse.

So, is this really about public health? A mandate upon a demographic that even if is conceded are a vector, have the lowest adverse outcomes when it comes to COVID-19. This writer would argue it comes down to two things: Money and power. Aside from using a tyrannical power-by-diktat to cover a person’s face, the most recognizable image since the moment of birth, there’s also a lot of money involved. The Massachusetts Teacher Association (MTA) has deftly used the Massachusetts legal money laundering service: The Massachusetts State Lobby.

Merrie Najimy, MTA’s President, and Max Page, Vice President of MTA, are registered lobbyists, and in 2020, they paid the various lobbies in MA just over \$180K, who then disburse some of those monies to Legislators on Beacon Hill. In 2021, MTA went next level, with over \$265K in state

lobby spending. It’s no secret Merrie & Max want kids to remain abused behind forced mask mandates. They’re spending the money to make sure of it. While direct donations to lobbyists are capped at \$200 per candidate, they can also donate \$200 to PAC’s, \$191 to People’s Committees, \$200 to the State Party Committee, \$200 to Local Party Committee, and no limits on Ballot Question Committees. In 2021, including Merrie & Max, that was 14 lobbyists the MTA used to spread the money around to get what they want.

This should surprise no one, in a state with the most secretive state legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government in the nation. One of only five states that limits access to public records by the public, with the only remaining state house in the nation still closed to the public. This is what The Massachusetts Democrat Party super-majority represents and brought to our homes with their mandates: Higher youth drug use, suicide, depression, and a myriad increase in other mental health issues. Your governing body, including Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker, did this, and continues to abuse our kids & young adults.

When anyone ever says it’s not about the money when it comes to public policy, you know they’re lying. It’s always about the money, and who gets it. Chances are that money is never going to be spent on you or your family. Personal liberty, which Massachusetts falls in the bottom half of the country, is an afterthought. This holds true to vaccine mandates as well, but that discussion, and the money surrounding it, is for another day (see prior Big Pharma piece [HERE](#)). However, the money & corrupt politics that surround this one-way, super-majority state is yet another reason no one ever says:

“Let’s move to Massachusetts!” ◇



# Celebrating Dracut’s Legacy of Farms and Freedom

By Brian Genest  
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

Break out the party horns: February 26 is Dracut’s birthday. As the town turns 321, there’s a lot to celebrate about our past, present, and future. One of those things is Dracut’s rich agricultural heritage.

“No farms, no food” isn’t just a catchy bumper sticker slogan, it’s also the harsh reality.

In Dracut, we’re fortunate to continue to have a number of working farms. Our local farms provide us with fresh food, healthier eating choices and the opportunity to support in-town commerce and our town farmers. DracutFarms.com has details about all the farms in town, the Community Preservation Act and other information about local agriculture.

Open space, preservation and conservation remain high priorities for the town. Right now, the newly-formed Beaver Brook Farm Development Ad-Hoc Subcommittee is digging in and plowing ahead to help make some decisions about the future of the 24-acre parcel.

The seven members recently approved

## EYE ON DRACUT

a charter, mission, and goals to guide the subcommittee as it works in conjunction with The Friends of Beaver Brook Farm, a private non-profit group, on land-use plans and other long-term considerations for the preserved property.

The subcommittee is working off the plan that was developed by a previous committee under the leadership of Ellis Neofotistos. The Board of Selectmen approved that plan in 2020 by a 4-1 vote. Selectman Heather Santiago-Hutchings voted against the plan.

The decaying out buildings are the immediate focus at Beaver Brook Farm. Several options are being discussed, including selling those buildings to the developer who bought and plans to restore the historic Justus Richardson farmhouse on the property.

At the Beaver Brook Farm and all over town, Dracut’s farming roots run deep. So does our town’s patriotism. Even before

America was a nation, farmers from here in Dracut joined the battle for freedom, putting down their hand tools and picking up muskets. They left their farms and joined the battlefield, fighting for our independence in the Revolutionary War under the leadership of Joseph Bradley Varnum.

From the 1700s to today, citizens of Dracut have proudly served our nation in times of war and peace. Throughout history, they have fought for and defended freedom at home and abroad. In two World Wars, as well as in Vietnam, Korea, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf and other locations around the world, citizens of Dracut have served our country in uniform.

Our heroes from Dracut who gave the ultimate sacrifice are remembered and honored with monuments, parks, and other memorials in town. For example, Dracut’s World War I monument, which



got restored recently thanks to the efforts of a private group, honors the 164 town citizens who fought in The Great War and never returned home to Dracut.

Farms and freedom are just two things that make Dracut’s legacy special. It’s a legacy we should celebrate and continue as we look to the next 300 years. Happy birthday, Dracut!

— Brian Genest is the producer and host of Eye on Dracut, a monthly news magazine show about town happenings that airs on DATV Channel 8 and online at DracutTV.org. ♦





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**Dr. Pierre Ghassibi**  
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

Our winters are very cold, so let us review the dangers of exposure. We know that less than a thirty- minute exposure to very low temperatures can result in injury by freezing of the skin and underlying tissues. This can also happen in skin covered by clothing, especially if wet. Because the skin gets numb, we may not realize that we have a problem. The skin area may be pale then change to red or purple in color. Smoking, drinking alcohol, having diabetes, some medications, all make the situation worse. An early frostnip can progress to a worse frostbite then to a chilblain with hardening, swelling, and blistering, infection, and disturbances in sweating. Unless the injury is slight, healing may take many days to a few weeks. A severe prolonged exposure may cause permanent skin damage with ulcers and gangrene.

Treatment should involve rewarming in warm water at 100 degrees Fahrenheit for at least 20 minutes. Re-exposure to extreme cold after having rewarmed the problem area can cause even more subsequent damage; so, no re-exposure should be allowed. With treatment and

rewarming, pain can reappear, and pain meds may be required. An oral pill to widen the blood vessels is occasionally prescribed by the doctor.

After one episode like this, the body becomes more prone to cold injury in the future.

Any persistent swelling, bluish color, poor pulses, severe pain, blistering or skin damage need a visit to a clinician ASAP.

Total body hypothermia, as we know, is more immediately serious and requires general rewarming in the emergency room with monitoring of the heart and possibly warming the inside of the body with warm irrigation of the stomach, bladder, or intravenous treatment.

It is nice to know that prompt attention to cold injuries can prevent otherwise serious problems.

Because soldiers were prone to foot disease from very cold weather along with humidity from wet shoes, a condition called “trench foot’ ,’ the soldiers in the first World War were requested to check each other’s feet at bedtime.

P. Ghassibi, MD  
ghassibi@hotmail.co ☐

**Rick Bellanti**  
VALLEY PATRIOT HEALTH COLUMNIST

Here we are into our second month of the year and hopefully you New Years resolution to get healthy is still going strong. If your weight loss has slowed down a bit, it’s normal. Remember it’s not about just working out. You have to take a look at what you’re eating, it really is the most important part of any health and wellness program and there are a couple of quotes that come to mind: “You cannot out train your diet” and also “Abs are made in the kitchen”. Food consumption has a larger impact on your wellness goals more than working out does if you are trying to lose weight. Think of it as the new 80/20 program.

When you are trying to get healthy and lose weight, what you do in the kitchen with your meals has 80% influence over your weight loss success and the other 20% would be your workout routine. For example: You want flat abs? Everyone has abdominal muscles (abs), they are just covered by a layer of fat in most people. What you need to do is get your body fat percentage down low enough to reveal them and it’s not by doing hundreds of sit-ups anymore, it’s by getting the proper nutrition in your

system. Your abs are really made in the kitchen not in the gym.

Keep a daily log as a Food Diary and a Physical Activity Diary. While exercise will help with weight loss, most people will tend to overestimate the amount of calories they burned while working out and then adjust for what they think they burned off exercising and then eat more then they should in return. Also, some people will underestimate what they are taking in for calories when eating and then overeat throughout the day. Keeping a log of what you’re taking in for calories each day will help you stay on track. You can always go back and look at your records if you are not seeing progress and find out what needs to be adjusted.

Everybody is unique and may have different caloric needs and a healthy lifestyle requires balance, in the foods you eat, and in the amount of physical activity or exercise you include in your daily routine. While counting calories is not necessary, it may help you in the beginning to gain an awareness of your eating habits as you strive to achieve the balance. The ultimate test of the balance is whether or not you are losing weight and making progress.

Crime Blotter: Federal Law Enforcement Cleaning up the Valley

**TRINITARIOS GANG MEMBER FROM LAWRENCE PLEADS GUILTY TO TRAFFICKING MULTIPLE GUNS, AMMUNITION, COCAINE AND FENTANYL**  
*Convicted felon sold at least 16 guns, ammunition and drugs to a cooperating witness*

A member of the Trinitarios street gang pleaded guilty today in federal court in Boston in connection with trafficking firearms, ammunition, cocaine and fentanyl in the Greater Lawrence area.

Arismendy Gil-Padilla, 31, of Lawrence, pleaded guilty to two counts of being a felon in possession of a firearm; two counts of distribution and possession with intent to distribute cocaine; and one count of distribution and possession to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl and cocaine. U.S. District Court Judge Denise J. Casper scheduled sentencing for May 26, 2022.

Gil-Padilla was indicted and arrested in November 2019 as part of a federal sweep targeting federal and state offenders, including members and associates of the Trinitarios street gang, in the Greater Lawrence area.

Beginning in 2017, law enforcement conducted an investigation into the members, associates and suppliers of the Trinitarios operating in the Greater Lawrence area. The Trinitarios is a street gang originating in the New York area with increased presence in Lawrence and the surrounding communities. According to court documents, many Trinitarios members are involved in a broad range of illegal activities including, but not limited to, firearms and drug trafficking as well as violent crimes undertaken to protect the interests of the gang and its members.

During the investigation, Gil-Padilla was identified as a member of the Trinitarios. On eight separate occasions between April and August 2018, Gil-Padilla sold at least 16 guns, ammunition, cocaine and fentanyl to a cooperating witness. Specifically, Gil-Padilla sold the cooperating witness two handguns, ammunition and cocaine for \$3,600 on June 28, 2018; seven firearms, ammunition and cocaine for \$6,240 on July 11, 2018; cocaine and fentanyl on August 2, 2018; and seven firearms and ammunition, a laser sight, fentanyl and cocaine for \$2,900 on various dates between April and May 2018. Gil-Padilla is prohibited from possessing firearms and ammunition due to a 2014 conviction of sale of a controlled substance that was punishable by more than one year in prison.

The charge of being a felon in possession of a firearm provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of distribution of and possession with intent to distribute cocaine provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, at least three years and up to a lifetime of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million. The charge of distribution of and possession to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl and cocaine provides for a sentence of at leave five years and up to 40 years in prison, at least four years and up to a lifetime of supervised release and a fine of up to \$5 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district judge based on the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau

of Investigation, Boston Division; James Ferguson, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Boston Field Division; Matthew B. Millhollin, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations, Boston Field Division; Essex County District Attorney Jonathan W. Blodgett; Colonel Christopher Mason, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police; Commissioner Carol Mici of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections; and Lawrence Police Chief Roy P. Vasque made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Carol E. Head of Rollins’ Asset Recovery Unit is prosecuting the case.

**CONVICTED FELON RAMON SILVELO-MILES OF HAVERHILL CHARGED WITH FIREARMS, DRUG OFFENSES**

A Haverhill man with multiple prior felony convictions was charged yesterday for possessing a loaded firearm and drugs intended for distribution.

Ramon Silvelo-Miles, 32, was charged with one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition and one count of possession with intent to distribute cocaine and fentanyl. Following an initial appearance yesterday before U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge David H. Hennessy, Silvelo-Miles was detained pending a probable cause hearing scheduled for Jan. 25, 2022.

According to the charging documents, in the early morning hours of Sept. 20, 2021, Silvelo-Miles was stopped by law enforcement for driving erratically on Route 24 in West Bridgewater. Field sobriety tests administered on-site indicated that Silvelo-Miles was too impaired to drive. It is alleged that a

subsequent search of the defendant’s car uncovered over 300 grams of cocaine packaged in small, clear plastic bags, as well as a small backpack inside the glove compartment that contained a clear plastic bag of fentanyl. A Raven Arms MP-25 .25 caliber pistol hidden within a black sock is also alleged to have been found in the glove compartment. The gun was loaded with one bullet in the chamber and five bullets in the magazine. Silvelo-Miles is prohibited from possessing a firearm due to multiple prior felony convictions including a 2014 conviction for manslaughter.

The charge of possession with intent to distribute cocaine and fentanyl provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, at least three years and up to a lifetime of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million. The charge of being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

**ILLEGAL ALIEN YSRAEL NUNEZ OF LAWRENCE PLEADS GUILTY TO ROLE IN DRUG TRAFFICKING CONSPIRACY**

A Dominican national residing in Lawrence pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court in Boston to conspiracy and distribution charges involving large quantities of fentanyl.

Ysrael Nunez, 39, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl; one count





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Pictured are residents Dorothy McCarthy and Helen Bart of Methuen Village at a recent Flower Arranging program at where residents were delighted in the ability to brighten a winter day with these colorful blooms!

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THANK YOU JOHN ZIMINI & THE SAINT JOHN'S HOCKEY TEAM!

Last month, John Zimini of Dracut brought the Saint John's Hockey Team to the TMF Family Dinner for the Homeless in Lawrence to serve food, talk to homeless addicts, and give back to the community. This is the second time in the last year that the hockey players from Saint John's came to Lawrence to help service those less fortunate. We want to encourage other sports teams in the area to reach out and do the same!



HERO: FROM PAGE 1

government than our Vietnam veterans were when they came home in the 1960s and 1970s". The mission at VAV is to raise money and help as many local Veterans as they can. What has made them so successful is that 100% of the funds they raise, all goes directly to Veterans. The group does not employ professional fundraisers or paid clerical staff to process paperwork and claims.

Why is there such a need for groups like Veterans Assisting Veterans and the American Legion? One of the topics we discussed was the rise in Veteran suicides during the COVID pandemic. According to research, compiled by the Costs of War Project at Brown University, the staff at Brown University found an estimated 30,177 active-duty personnel and veterans have died by suicide, this figure includes only those who have served in the US military since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. These deaths are over triple the 7,057 military personnel killed post 9/11 while conducting military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The detailed research report was compiled by Dr Ben Suitt, PhD, the author of "Finding Resonance Amid Trauma: Moral Injury and the Role of Religion Among Christian Post-9/11 U.S. Veterans."

Dealing with Veteran suicide prevention, Veteran homelessness, Veteran Substance abuse is one of the many missions of Veterans Assisting Veterans, the American Legion, Hidden Battles, and several other Veterans organizations. John MacDonald said the VAV is dynamic and effective because there's very little paperwork and the VAV team can react to a Veteran's need right away. "We review individuals who need the help. Then determine if they are worthy of us spending money, and once we do, we go out and service the Veteran's needs."

We discussed how recently a local American Legion post, addressed the needs of a Veteran with a family. The Veteran was at risk to lose his job, due to his car needing repairs, the local Legion Post contacted a local repair shop, had the Veteran's car repaired, inspected, and registered. Paying the repair shop directly out of American Legion funds. The actions of this Legion Post,

prevented a local Veteran from losing his job, risking homelessness, and substance abuse or worse.

John accepted the position of Post Commander in Lowell because he feels that he can leverage the American Legion's experience of 102 years of helping Veterans and their families. John feels that the existing programs with the American Legion framework, are effective in guiding Veterans to resources for meeting their education, employment, housing, and health care needs. The camaraderie of an active American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, or American Veterans Post is a great way of combating the isolation, depression, and loneliness many returning Veterans experience.

One of the many topics we covered was the importance of the Veteran and his entire family, registering to VOTE, and checking Veteran on their town or city's census. Continually helping his fellow Veterans, over 30 years after his own service in Persian Gulf War, John MacDonald, is truly a "Hero in Our Midst"!

The Dracut American Legion asks all World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans, to call (603) 518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC! Veterans of all eras are asked to go the American Legion's Web site [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org), and join the American Legion, working with Congress, preserving our Veteran's Benefits for future generations.

John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the US



Navy; he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 25 years. If you know a World War II, Korean War, or Vietnam War, Veteran who would like their story told, please email him at [John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com](mailto:John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com) ♦

For better results it's always best to incorporate both, healthy eating and working out into your wellness routine. I didn't start working out until I was into my sixth month of my weight loss and wellness journey and I started out by just walking. It wasn't until my seventh month that I started to workout out and build lean muscle.

Building lean muscle in your body also helps burn fat and is highly recommended when you start to get near your goal weight and to help push you through any plateaus you might have. Remember whichever you choose stay hydrated with lots of water, start a Food

Diary and a Physical Activity Diary, even if it's a short walk for thirty minutes daily.

Rick Bellanti is a wellness columnist and is on a journey himself to lose 240lbs, and has lost 140lbs since the start of 2015. If you have any questions or comments, please post them to his Getting Healthy with Rick Bellanti Facebook page and once a month he will address a few of the topics here



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KANE’S CORNER

John MacDonald on the Revitalization of the Lowell American Legion Post 0087

KANE  
VALLEY PATRIOT MASCOT

John MacDonald has recently been appointed as Commander to the Lowell American Legion Post 0087. Kane knows John MacDonald is no stranger to bringing Veterans together to connect over shared experiences. In fact, as a Desert Storm Veteran, he made a promise to himself to honor the fallen and stay aware of the needs of his fellow veterans. The American Legion Post 0087 in Lowell, Massachusetts is working to revitalize its membership and attract a variety of men and woman veterans of different ages. Kane asked John what the first step would be, he said, “bringing people together to discuss their mission for the post. Giving members a say in the vision for the organization is a critical first step.” Kane thought what better person to do this than John MacDonald.

This is what Kane learned about the American Legion. The American Legion was chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veterans’ organization devoted to mutual helpfulness. (legion.org) The mission statement adopted by the National Executive Committee in October 2020 is to enhance the well - being of American Veterans, their families, our military, and our communities by our devotion to mutual helpfulness. The American Legion vision statement is “The American Legion: Veterans Strengthening America.” Kane took out his laptop and learned

from the American Legion Post 0087 Facebook page that the American Legion embraces all current and former members of the military and helps their transition to civilian life in their community. What this means is their members have contributed selflessly to something larger than themselves and inspire others to serve and strengthen America. Legion members uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States and honor veterans from past generations and the present generation never to be forgotten.

Kane realized that this is important and honorable work. He felt very lucky to meet John MacDonald. In fact, he may walk over and talk to John MacDonald again to see what else he could learn. Did you know there is going to be a meat raffle on Saturday April 9th from 12pm to 3pm. Kane couldn’t stop thinking about chicken and wondered if John also liked chicken. Maybe he could go there for a barbecue and have a chicken sandwich.

John explained to Kane that what motivated people to join the Legion in 1940 may not be what motivates members in 2022. One focus of the American Legion is to provide a place to gather to socialize with other veterans and veteran families. The first step is knowing that the Post exists and that veterans are welcome. Kane learned that many veterans are like minded in a strong interest in Civic Duty. John mentioned the importance of advocacy



and meeting to have a local voice for veteran issues. This may be advocating for political bills that help veterans in need, providing education to the community on veteran issues, and or direct assistance to veterans. Other ways people connect may be more social events such as barbecues and athletic event.

Part of the foundation building will be reconnecting to Ceremonies and the creation of an Honor Guard to mark the contributions of the Fallen on Memorial Day, honor the passing of local veterans, and Veteran Day celebrations. Acknowledging these important days provide an important common purpose for members as well as educating the public on the contributions of the fallen

and the veterans walking among us in our community. Kane often attends Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies. These ceremonies are humbling and remind Kane of how lucky we are to have our freedom due to the bravery of past and present service members.

If you are a veteran and would like to join the Lowell American Legion Post 0087, please stop by to fill out an application or contact Norman Guigere at 978-835-3066 for more information. Kane started following the American Legion Post 0087 Facebook page so now he is really in the “know”, he hopes you follow the Facebook page too.

Woof  
Kane Peaslee, Columnist Valley Patriot

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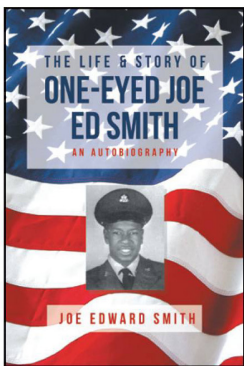
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Property Sales, Foreclosures for JANUARY, 2022 in Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover. (All properties are listed in order; seller, buyer, price, address.)



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Patricia Rocker-Potter Est & Damon Rocker, Michael Karavetsos, \$320,000, 16 Balmoral St Unit 115  
Josephine Walker & Douglas Halsted III, Santiago Suarez & Sigella Vargas, \$620,000, 17 Kenilworth St  
Taylor Cove Development LLC, Abhishek Kumar & Naina Sharma, \$709,900, 31 Taylor Cove Unit 22  
Brett & Trina Roberson & Trina Scaringelli, Charles Anderson, \$600,000, 4 Summer St  
Elie & Georgina Nassar, Selcuk Ilke, \$676,500, 20 Brown St  
Ronald Kearn Est & Charles Kearn, SAI Builders LLC, \$650,000, 407 High Plain Rd  
Vogel Realty Tr & Johanna McLean, Elsa Liu, \$715,000, 161-163 North Main St  
Renton Realty Tr & Anita & Jeffrey Renton Tr, Saravana Soundararajan & Indumathi Pattabiraman, \$1,120,000, 78 Bellevue Rd  
Eva & Scott Vieweg, Jean-Fresnel Josaphat, \$715,000, 394 Lowell St  
Mary Carbone Est & Michael Carbone, North Shore Real Estate Solutions LLC, \$460,000, 3 Cyr Cir  
Whetstone 30 Minutman Park LLC, Are-Ma Region No 97 Holding LLC, \$6,894,000, 30 Minuteman Rd  
Whetstone 100 Minuteman Park LLC, Are-Ma Region No 97 Holding LLC, \$58,689,000, 60,80,100 Minuteman  
Whetstone 200 Minuteman Park LLC, Are-Ma Region No 97 Holding LLC, \$70,632,000, 200 Minuteman Rd  
Whetstone Minuteman Park Greenery LLC, Are-Ma Region No 97 Holding LLC, \$500,000, 500R & 600 Minuteman Rd  
Whetstone 138 Minuteman Park LLC, Are-Ma Region No 97 Holding LLC, \$14,285,000, 138 River Rd  
Ying Zhang & Ling Gu, Mohammad Riaz & Habibunnisa Shujauddin, \$810,000, 420 South Main St  
Marilyn Road Nominee Trust & Donald Close Tr, Matthew & Lauren Buckley, \$650,000, 35 Marilyn Rd  
Ann Scott & Dennis, Katherine, & James Hardcastle, Antonia Gruning, \$375,000, 56 Maple Ave Unit 2  
Suzanne Sicuranza, Katherine Hardcastle, \$230,000, 20 Colonial Dr Unit 1  
Michael Ring & Michael J Ring, Mark Pitz, \$540,000, 41 River St  
Zemis Family Irrevocable Tr & John & John Zemis Jr Tr& Janice Sweetra Tr, Mariia Gorkun & Sergiy Maslov, \$521,500, 155 Elm St  
Richard Aversa & Christopher Cowie, Timonty Foley & Leah Horton, \$1,825,000, 50 Morton St  
Brian Vecchiolla & Marie McIntosh & Shawn McAtamney, Steven & Stephanie Ray, \$965,000, 18 Brady Loop  
Christopher & Kate Orbon, Valerie Jensen, \$500,000, 34 1/2 Maple Ave Unit 1  
Gladys Gaines , Vijit Shah & Khyati Desai, \$1,180,008, 4 Starwood Crossing  
Cindy Morrison, Rissy Ibraheem, \$206,400, 174 Haverhill St Unit 313  
Beryl Fraser Est & Marlene Couture, Hismercyproperties LLC, \$340,000, 10 Burnham Rd  
Jennifer & David Farino Jr, Amanda Goodwin, \$470,000, 51 Dufton Rd  
Phillip & Donna Coppola, Sivakumar

Sivanandan& Devi Svianandam, \$1,000,000, 63 Spring Grove Rd  
Annemarie McInerney, Kevin & Maureen Callahan, \$422,000, 250 North Main St Unit 6  
Janet Mitchell, Samuel & Janet Nork, \$700,000, 1 Judson Rd  
Todd D Lindsay Living Trust & Todd Lindsay Tr, Peter F Symosek Family Tr & Peter Symosek Tr, \$800,000, 18 Summer St Unit 5  
US Bank NA Tr, Jamieson Homes LLC, \$825,000, 83 Chestnut St  
Susan E Goldman Revocable Tr & Susan Goldman Tr, Dianne Oberle, \$399,000, 1 Francis Dr Unit 302  
Heidi Deschamp & Heidi Deschamps, Lee Novick, \$550,000, 10 Temple Pl Unit 8  
Richard Lindsay Jr Tr & Martha Lindsay Tr & Richard David Lindsay Jr & Martha C Lindsay Living Tr, Chandler Road Tr & Christine Harshbarger, \$640,000, 21 Chandler Rd  
Marina Maylor, Yunpeng Fan & Maggie Chu, \$300,000, 6 Crescent Dr Unit 11

LAWRENCE

Arlington Street LLC, Manuel Lamarche, \$850,000, 153-159 Arlington St  
Mary Lovely Tr & Doris M Lavoie Tr & Karen Lavoie Tr, Gezim Laze & Dorina Alimadhi, \$600,000, 146 Easton St  
Lebel Investments LLC, Prime Real Estate Investment LLC, \$200,000, 540 Essex St  
Muriel Caracoglia, Robinson Jose & Jokarys Mireles, \$310,000, 343 S Broadway  
Stacy Brogna, Sean Brogn, \$73,000, 106 Leroy Ave  
Prakash & Chhitiz Manandhar, Jesus Carrera & Sandra Rivera, \$400,000, 97 Bodwell St  
Adan Villarlba, Manuel Ramirez & Niurka Garcia, \$705,000, 508-510 Hampshire St  
David & Stephanie Mcmillan, Sarah Benjamin, \$430,000, 297 Mount Vernon St  
Pierce Nominee Tr & Michael Pierce Tr & Denis Pierce Tr, Eduvino Delacruz & Kelvin Cruceta, \$597,500, 78 Jennings St  
Lynne Dunne, James McIntosh, \$250,000, 11 Hobson St  
Geraldo Polanco, Yefry Paniagua, \$550,000, 30-32 Tremont St  
Roberta Belson Tr & Richard Belson Living Tr, La Belle Maison LLC, \$700,000, 439-443 Riverside Dr  
487-489 Andover Realty Tr & Steven DeRosa Tr, Carmen Jorge, \$570,000, 487 Andover St  
David & Judith McCarthy, Omar Loaiza & Natalie Garcie, \$205,500, 63 Myrtle St  
Anndy Diaz, Julio & Adalgisa Soto, \$348,000, 339 Water St  
Sito Realty Tr & Irene Tarshi Tr, 499 Essex Realty LLC, \$1,300,000, 499 Essex St  
Njerodzawo Mupanduki & Margaret Njenga, Marillendy Silverio, \$330,000, 55 Bowdon St Unit 1 &55  
Silvana Hoffman & Roseanna Hope & Mary Brown, Nelson Hernand & Deyanira Dominguez, \$448,000, 10 Cornish Rd  
Luis & Muny Mejia & Muny Choeun , Darleny Baez & Winton Hernandez, \$525,000, 627 Haverhill St

Kenia Rosario & Kenia Furcal, Kaisy Rosario, \$165,000, 165 Butler St  
Millwood Realty LLC, Mui Tuyen, \$370,000, 543 Andover St Unit 7  
Millwood Realty LLC, Mui Tuyen, \$370,000, 543 Andover St Unit 8  
Eridania Arias, Milton Ramirez, \$530,000, 45-47 Bodwell St  
Celines Ramos & Ariel & Mariano Torres Jr , Angel Linares, \$350,000, 10 Greenfield St  
Daniel Guzman & Martha Carrasco, Yonairis Speing, \$270,000, 9 Harriman St Unit A  
Ana Paulino & Franzix Mendoza, Bernadino Ortiz & Nildaly Morales, \$460,000, 30 Boyd St  
Alicia Taveras, J& S investement Lawrence LLC, \$320,000, 5 Melrose St  
Ram Gupta, Milagros Mateo, \$192,000, 270 East Haverhill St Unit 16  
Donald Nadeau Jr, Jose De Los Santos , \$620,000, 38-40 Bellevue St  
Michelle Nelson Tr & 101 Wachusett Avenue Realty Tr, Matthew Pomerleau & Suhad Shahin, \$360,000, 101 Wachusett Ave  
Francisco & Juliana Cruz, Eufemio Rodriguez, \$379,000, 20 Amherst St  
Maria Mejia, Francisca De Santiago & Jose Rodriguez, \$470,000, 20 Boehm St  
Broadway Plaza Tr & David Kiu Tr, Alternatives Plaza LLC, \$3,500,000, 199-229 Broadway  
Christopher & Linda Law, Pedro Luperon, \$650,000, 82-84 Farley St  
Michael, Cesarina, & Nabil Silfa, Rafael Mejia & Wiston Almanzar, \$1,300,000, 85-85B Newbury St  
Olga Cruz, Anderson & Marcellus Saint Hilaire, \$355,000, 127 May St  
Eduardo Sierra, Denise Rodriguez, \$640,000, 198 Prospect St  
Angel & Arelys Burgos, Ethan Zorrilla & Delores De Zorilla, \$770,000, 88-92 Auburn St  
Miriam Concepcion, Marino Almonte, \$600,000, 419-421 Andover St  
Sixty Jamaica St LLC, Than & Han-Gia Pham, \$555,000, 60 Jamaica St  
Maha Karam Est & Issam Karam, Yris Acosta, \$385,000, 168 Berkeley St  
William Perez, Luis Frias, \$200,000, 137 Arlington St Unit B  
Horizon Holding LLC, John Gergos, \$610,000, 54 Gray Rd  
Francisco Cacere, Maxirex Melendez, \$680,000, 4 East St  
Steven Derosa Tr & 17-2 Realty Tr, Carmen Garcia, \$220,000, 17 Boxford St Unit 2  
NLCB Real Estate LLC, Omar & Jacqueline Garcia, \$751,000, 256-258 Farnham St  
McGowan One Family Tr & Caroline McGowan Tr, Juan Lopez, \$480,000, 45 Bigelow St  
Cesar Taveras, Griselda & Aneudy Garcia, \$470,000, 19 Hall St  
Ines & Eliezer Calzada, Teresa Cueto, \$305,000, 302 Water St  
Robert Godin Est & Phillip & Diane Macy, Andres Castillo, \$330,000, 70 Columbus Ave  
Lindorfo & Cristina Silva , Francisco Urena & Deyanira Baez, \$549,900, 53 Mechanic St  
Kimball 12 Pine LLC, Ruben Tineo & Yeimy Sandoval, \$600,000, 19-21 Lenox St  
Israel Rodriguez, Ruben Tineo & Yeimy Sandoval, \$670,000, 12 Dorchester St  
William & Clara Diaz, Akeury

Fernandez, \$710,000, 107-111 Haverhill St  
Keyser Living Tr & Kenneth Keyser Tr & Karin Keyser Tr, SRS Realty LLC, \$1,085,000, 151-153 Bailey St  
Mangkul Duong, Oscar Barrios, \$385,000, 9 South St

METHUEN

Marie Longo Est & Lynda Dilandro , Jane Dicesare, \$320,000, 30 Christopher Dr Unit 45  
Robert Palmisano Tr & Robert Palmisano Revocable Tr & Dovaro 5 Pleasant St LLC, Residences at the Masonic Lodge LLC, \$1,975,000, 275 Broadway & 5 Pleasant St  
Sergio Garcia & Claudia Ortega, Adline Jerome, \$470,000, 19 Joy Ter  
Richard Gomes & Alexandra Lima, Ninos & Monique Nwiya, \$425,000, 49 Meriline Ave  
Kelly Ramirez, Soccorro Espinal, \$387,900, 6 Parker Ct  
Mark & Suzanne Smith, Victor Magana & Maria Duran, \$855,000, 49 Pine Tree Dr Unit 85  
Estep Inc, Alba & David , \$400,000, 14 King St Unit 14  
Timothy Coakley Jr & Mireille Lafrance-Coakley , Grenys Lopez, \$450,000, 8 Smith Ave  
JR Builders Inc, Paul & Patricia Duggan, \$777,500, 9 Cooper Ln  
Merci & Raul Vargas & Merci Peguero, Justin & Monica Barry, \$630,000, 7 Chausse Dr  
Kevin & Frank Oneill & Kathleen Oneill Est, Jose & Elisabete Aguiar, \$505,000, 7 Windsor St  
Joseph Maggio, Mei Huang, \$175,000, 6 Marvin St  
Ida Silva, Insook Vallario, \$14,000, Kensington Ave  
David & Ratha Breen, Lan Phan & Tanh Tran & Quang Phan, \$625,000, 4 Saint St  
Anthony Minicucci Est & Joseph Minicucci Jr, Rafael Gomez, \$480,000, 35 Worcester St  
Francisco Serret, James Woods, \$385,000, 538 Prospect St  
Utica Capital LLC, Idalio Guzman & Michael Reinoso, \$220,000, 28 Adelaide Ave Unit 28  
Forrest Chesley & Patricia Keil, Alexander Reinoso & Aura Vargas, \$530,000, 6 Central St  
Janice Park, Ruber Pimentel, \$420,000, 6 White Ave  
Bert & Deborah Noyes, Eliezer Zorrilla, \$550,000, 29 Maple St  
Kelly & George Norwood Jr., Peter & Gail Sammarco, \$739,000, 69 Pine Tree Dr Unit 75  
Veronica Peralta, Luis Peralta & Elubia Ruiz, \$600,000, 160-162 Tenney St  
Bruce Bornstein, Jesse Maldonado, \$460,000, 35 Dexter St  
Lakeview Loan Servicing LLC, Dilicia Almonte, \$287,500, 3 Green St  
Angela Sualino & Angela Meyburg, Fianna Walsh, \$568,000, 43 Tyler St  
Obrien Living Tr & Elizabeth Obrien Tr, Man Lei, \$235,000, 21-415 Hampshire St Unit 21-415  
Samuel Taveras, APT Partnership, \$245,000, 945 Riverside Dr Unit 24A  
Alan Russell, Redfinnow Borrower LLC, \$390,000, 44 Pinehurst Ave  
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**FEDS: FROM 11**

of distribution, possession with intent to distribute fentanyl; and one count of distribution of and possession with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl and aiding and abetting. U.S. District Court Judge Leo T. Sorokin scheduled sentencing for March 18, 2022. Nunez was charged along with co-defendant Leisy Baez-Zapata in July 2019 and were indicted by a federal grand jury in August 2019.

In October 2018, agents began investigating a drug trafficking organization (DTO) that distributed fentanyl in the Lawrence area. Between October 2018 and July 2019, a cooperating witness made controlled purchases of fentanyl from the DTO and on July 24, 2019, Nunez sold the cooperating witness approximately 23 grams of fentanyl. During that meeting, they discussed the DTO supplying the cooperating witness with a kilogram of fentanyl. The following day, the cooperating witness made arrangements with Nunez to purchase a kilogram of fentanyl which Leisy Baez-Zapata subsequently delivered to the cooperating witness and an undercover agent.

On Sept. 29, 2021, Baez-Zapata was sentenced by Judge Sorokin to time served (approximately 26 months in prison) and three years of supervised release after previously pleading guilty.

The charges of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl and distribution of 400 grams or more of fentanyl provides for a sentence of at least 10 years and up to life in prison, at least five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$10 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based on the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. The Department of Justice reinvigorated PSN in 2017 as part of the Department’s renewed focus on targeting violent criminals, directing all U.S. Attorney’s Offices to work in partnership with federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement and the local community to develop effective, locally-based strategies to reduce violent crime.

**Boxford Plumbing Co. Owner  
Charged with Tax Evasion & Mail Fraud**

A Boxford businessman was charged today and has agreed to plead guilty to defrauding the government of more than \$1.45 million by engaging in a multi-year tax evasion scheme and to defrauding a customer by billing him for plumbing services he did not perform.

Jared Derrico, a/k/a “Jay,” 35, was charged and has agreed to plead guilty to one count of tax evasion and two counts of mail fraud. A plea hearing has not yet been scheduled by the Court.

According to the charging documents, for tax years 2015 through 2019, Derrico operated a plumbing business known, variously, as Derrico Services and The Pipe Surgeon. During that time, Derrico allegedly cashed payments from his customers or deposited them into his personal accounts, but did not report this income on his tax returns. It is also alleged that Derrico fraudulently obtained payments for installing air conditioning units at a property in Boston, but in fact, did not install the units.

The charge of tax evasion provides for a sentence of up to 5 years in prison,

up to 3 years of supervised release and a fine of \$250k or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. The charge of mail fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250k or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. According to the terms of the plea agreement, Derrico will pay restitution to the IRS and will be required to pay restitution to the victims of the charged scheme to defraud, if accepted by the Court. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines & other statutory factors.

**Methuen Man Pleads Guilty to  
Fentanyl Trafficking Conspiracy**

A Methuen man pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court in Boston to selling a fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl mixture to an undercover agent on five occasions.

Andi Guerrero-Lara, a/k/a “Manny Sierra,” 24, pleaded guilty to a seven count superseding indictment charging him with one count of conspiracy to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl and 100 grams or more of acetyl fentanyl; three counts of distribution and possession with intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl and 10 grams or more of acetyl fentanyl; two counts of distribution and possession with intent to distribute 10 grams or more of acetyl fentanyl and fentanyl; and one count of possession with intent to distribute 100 grams or more of acetyl fentanyl and 40 grams or more of fentanyl. U.S. District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns scheduled sentencing for May 5, 2022.

In December 2019, Guerrero-Lara was indicted along with co-defendant Angel Rivera-Valle. He was subsequently charged in a superseding indictment on Sept. 2, 2020.

The defendants were members of a drug trafficking organization operating in the Merrimack Valley area of Massachusetts that regularly sold large quantities of fentanyl. Between September and October 2019, an undercover agent purchased a fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl mixture from the defendants on five separate dates. According to court documents, after Rivera-Valle was arrested, Guerrero-Lara led agents on a high-speed car chase that spanned numerous miles and three cities during which Guerrero-Lara endangered multiple lives, as he narrowly missed crashing into a construction zone and police vehicles. Ultimately, Guerrero-Lara stopped his vehicle at an apartment complex in Lawrence and was arrested.

On Sept. 8, 2020, Rivera-Valle was sentenced by Judge Sterns to 64 months in prison and four years of supervised release.

This case is part of a coordinated enforcement operation in the Valley called “Devil’s Highway.” The operation targeted the distribution of opioids, including fentanyl and heroin, and resulted in charges against a total of 40 people for federal drug offenses, with at least a dozen more individuals facing state charges.

The charges of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl and 100 grams or more of acetyl fentanyl, and distribution and possession with intent to distribute 100 grams of acetyl fentanyl, each provide for a sentence of at least 10 years and up to life in prison, at least five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$10 million. The charge of distribution and possession with intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl and 10 grams or more of acetyl fentanyl provides for a sentence of at least five years and up to 40 years in prison, at least four years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$5 million.



TV TALK with BILL CUSHING



‘Station Eleven’

**Bill Cushing**  
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

“I remember damage.” This line is repeated throughout ‘Station Eleven,’ a new 10-episode limited series adapted from the 2015 novel by Emily St. John Mandel. The line comes from the fictional graphic novel named ‘Station Eleven’ that figures prominently in the show’s storyline. The repetition of the line throughout the series emphasizes how much ‘Station Eleven’ is about the way our past trauma makes us who we are and who we will become.

The post-apocalyptic story follows a band of survivors of a global pandemic far worse than COVID-19. The “Georgia Flu” as it’s called, decimates most of the world’s population in a matter of weeks, leaving traumatized survivors to carry on in a world quickly reduced to an archaic society of tribes and nomads.

In the riveting, nerve racking first episode, the story opens in Chicago with the on-stage death of famous actor Arthur Leander at a performance of ‘King Lear.’ Then we’re introduced to Jeevan (Himesh Patel), an audience member at the performance, who takes one of the young actresses in the cast (Matilda Lawler’s) named Kirsten, under his wing. This temporary bit of babysitting becomes full-on guardianship when a fast-spreading, lethal virus pushes Chicago and society to the brink of ruin. Together they take shelter at Jeevan’s brother Frank’s (Nabhaan Rizwan) apartment.

As the show progresses, we are introduced to another thread of the story. This one takes place in a small regional airport, to which several strangers have their planes diverted as the world crumbles. Their attempt to build a civilization of their own, led by a well-intentioned Irishman (David Wilmot), a former actress (Caitlin FitzGerald) and a security guard (Milton Barnes), provides some of the series’ lighter moments, and one of its darkest.

The story is also propelled two decades into a post-apocalyptic future in which very few people have survived. An adult Kirsten (now played by Mackenzie Davis) is part of a troupe of actors known as the Traveling Symphony, who tour the Midwest putting on Shakespeare plays.

The Traveling Symphony (made up

of such delightful supporting actors including Lori Petty, Philippine Velge, and Joe Pingue), crosses paths with a man known as The Prophet (Daniel Zovatto) and his cult of young, impressionable followers seemingly at random. However, we will come to learn that he might have more of a connection to the performers than anyone initially suspects.

Slowly but steadily, you learn how the ensemble connects, as well as what happened to Jeevan, Frank, and more characters who faced the flu when it first broke. The show weaves the past and present stories of its principal characters in a way that never feels redundant or overcomplicated.

Carrying the show through at all times is the strong cast, starting with Davis. She gives a performance of heartbreaking openness, wearing every emotion on her sleeve, and the way she presents the role of an actor in this damaged post-pandemic world is comforting. Also giving a remarkable performance is the shows other Kirsten. Lawler’s maturity in the role never feels unrealistic. A highlight of the series is when we get to see the two actresses and two versions of Kirsten play beautifully off of each other.

The 10-part limited series, created by Patrick Somerville (The Leftovers) is difficult to watch at times but approaches its heavy subject matter with a hopeful tone. You might think that watching ‘Station Eleven’ during a pandemic couldn’t be a worse time, but that’s also part of what makes it special. While other television shows and films serve as direct reminders of what we’ve all been going through the last 2 years, ‘Station Eleven’ provides us with a healing and optimistic experience by looking beyond the familiar to explore the unknown.

‘Station Eleven’ is available to stream on HBO Max.

If you have any questions about TV, you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column.

Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion. ◇



WEATHER 101 with AL KAPRIELIAN

WHAT IS A BOMB CYCLONE?

Welcome to February and the last full month of the winter season.

During February, the days will continue to get longer. On February 2nd, the sunset occurred at 5PM, but, the sun angle will continue getting higher in the sky resulting in higher daytime temperatures. We can still get outbreaks of arctic air in February. Snowstorms can occur. The Blizzard of 1978 occurred during the first week in February. By the end of the month, with a higher sun angle this will cause the snow to start melting faster. We can still expect winter weather during the month of February.

Recapping January, it did live up to being the coldest month of the year. Boston averaged two degrees below normal for the month. The last really cold January was back in 2018. It was a much colder month than December. True winter arrived as the jet stream tracked to our south allowing the arctic air in Canada to plunge into New England. As a result of the southward track of the jet stream, this allowed us to get much more snow compared to December. We did see a storm bring some winter weather and snow on January 7th.

However, the big weather event of the month came at the end of the month on Saturday, January 29th with the Blizzard of 2022. Energy in the upper atmosphere which was in western Canada moved into the United States and eventually approached the Southeast US coast. This energy formed a low-pressure system off the North Carolina coast. With a lot of energy in the jet stream (rising air) combining with the warmer ocean waters this caused the LOW-PRESHA system to rapidly intensify.

This is known as bombogenesis. This storm became a bomb cyclone. In order for a low-pressure system to become a bomb cyclone the pressure has to drop 24 millibars in 24 hours. The bomb cyclone on the 29th dropped 35 millibars in 18 hours. This bomb cyclone brought heavy snow to Massachusetts. It also brought hurricane force winds (74 miles per hour) to Cape Cod. Some areas on the cape had winds greater than hurricane force.

Wellfleet had a gust to 82 miles per hour, West Dennis had a gust to 81 miles per hour, Chatham had a gust to 78 miles per hour. These winds caused numerous power outages on Cape Cod due to falling trees and power lines. At one point, on the morning of the 29th, the whole town of Provincetown had no power.

Numerous power outages also occurred over Plymouth County northward to the south shore of Boston. Power outages also occurred in coastal Essex County of Massachusetts. Rockport had a gust to 76 miles per hour. With this being an ocean storm, which tracked east of Cape Cod and Nantucket, the strongest winds and heaviest snow occurred to areas closer to the ocean.

The snowfall jackpot was areas south of Boston, Southeast MA where up to 2 feet of snow fell. Close to 2 feet of snow even occurred over the upper



part of Cape Cod. The highest snowfall occurred in Stoughton, MA 30.9 inches. Second was Sharon, MA 30.4 inches. Third was Quincy MA 30 inches. Snowfall amounts dropped off in areas west of Worcester to the Berkshires up into Vermont and interior New Hampshire as these areas were further away for the track of the storm. Boston tied its most single day snowfall of 23.6 inches on the 29th. The other date with 23.6 inches occurred on February 17, 2003.

This past January was also the 4th snowiest month on record. Prior to the Bomb cyclone on the 29th there was a lot of disagreement with the computer models on the track of the storm. The American Model GFS was taking the storm well out to sea earlier that week. The European model was bringing it further west. As we got into Wednesday, evening January 26th and Thursday, January 27th, the other Computer models Nam North American model, Canadian model, and the UKmet model were tracking the storm similar to the European model. With these trends in the models, it was looking more likely we were going to get a big storm.

By the end of that week the GFS model started trending closer to the other models and this basically said we are going to get hit hard by this storm. This indeed happened. This Bomb cyclone produced blizzard conditions in the following towns: Boston, Worcester, Beverly, Hyannis, Marshfield, and Martha’s Vineyard. To meet blizzard conditions the following criteria, have to be met; Falling/Blowing snow you can have blizzard conditions with no falling snow but blowing snow. #2 frequent winds gusts of 35 miles per hour or greater, and visibility of a quarter mile or less.

All these criteria have to occur for 3+ consecutive hours. During the Bomb cyclone most areas saw a fluffy snow due to the very cold conditions. Over SE MA and Cape Cod it was a wetter, heavier snow at least for the start of the storm. This heavier snow also enhanced the power outage risk. Will we see another Blizzard in February? Will the cold in January continue into February? Stay tuned to next month’s article for the answers. In the meantime, stay safe!!

Those of you who like winter enjoy. ◇



# Finding Your Voice in Times of Uncertainty!

Peter Larocque  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

To say we are now living in times of uncertainty is an understatement. In case you haven't noticed, we are in the midst of a Global Pandemic that continues raising its ugly head! Should we just lay down and quit? Tap ourselves out? Should we seclude, or isolate ourselves to the point of becoming a recluse? Should we so detach from one another to the point of becoming super self- absorbed! This is exactly what the devil wants, to divide us because he knows we are BETTER TOGETHER!!!

Now before I continue, I am not talking about if you find yourself sick and you sequester yourself to avoid infecting others. Don't confuse being kind to one another and living in FEAR! Here is a good measure or sign for FEAR, if you find yourself driving in your car all alone with windows up and wearing your mask you may be living in FEAR.

Our Father God said in Genesis 2:18, "And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; ..." NKJV. God knows we are BETTER TOGETHER!!! Notice He didn't put us on our own secluded island, no He put us together right where He wants us!

So, what do we do if we find ourselves full of FEAR? First, ask yourselves what does the Bible say about FEAR? Where does it come from? According to 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." NKJV. The Bible tells us that fear doesn't come from God. So, that means it comes from the other spirit who hates our very existence. But God loves us and demonstrated His love towards us as it says in, Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." NKJV. Here is what Jesus said before going to the cross, John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." NKJV. Nobody can LET NOT for you, the choice is ours, we can live our lives full of FEAR or we can live in the PEACE that Jesus left to us which is His PEACE! The same PEACE that allowed him to sleep in a middle of a storm!

There was an incident that took place right after a Great Man that we read about in the Bible died, his name was Moses. His successor Joshua was about to begin his journey as God's Leader of His people. Joshua knew he had to fill the shoes of someone who has gone down in history as a "Friend of God" as it says in Exodus 33:11. NKJV. God's encouragement for Joshua is recorded in Joshua 1:7-9, "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to

the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." NKJV.

Joshua had to find his own voice in the shadow of the death of this great man of God. God tells Joshua to be strong and take courage and that's not all! God knew Joshua was going to need more, therefore God said in verse 5, "As I was with Moses, I will be with you wherever you go!" God was helping Joshua to deal with his FEAR by telling him, wherever you go I will be with you! God was not leaving Joshua alone to deal with his FEAR and neither will He leave us alone to deal with our FEAR! God has promised us like He promised Joshua in Hebrews 13:5, "...I will never leave you nor forsake you." NKJV.

The Devil is filling the world with FEAR of this Virus? The Devil, as I said earlier, the one who hates our very existence! But we have an answer for him which is found in Hebrews 2:14, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil," NKJV. The devil's influence has been destroyed at the cross!!! The Cross gives you and me the strength and courage to deal with our FEARS and not run from them!

God also told Joshua to keep his head in His Word! Don't let it depart from your mouth and meditate in it day and night! The devil is working overtime to stop people from hearing about Jesus and finding his or her voice during this time? The one place that helps us in this endeavor is the Church! God's House!

Grocery stores, restaurants and theaters and malls are full, but going to Church is off limits! Ask yourself, what's stopping you from going to God's House? The Bible says in Psalms 92:13, "Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God." NKJV. And also exhorts us in Hebrews 10:25, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, ..." NKJV.

It is time we stop taking our marching orders from the 24-Hour News Channels and follow God's exhortation to Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." AMEN!!!

God Bless and Love to all of You!  
Peter Larocque ♦

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# DePena: FROM 4

For much too long, prior administrations have concentrated on projects and housing that have not netted any tax income for the city and have not truly support the Business & Economic Development Division of the City of Lawrence. Future outlook identifies opportunities for business and city leaders to work together in a number of key areas – in particular, smart growth (which is taking a strategic approach to growth, with clear targets, public and private sector investment, support for enterprise, appropriate regulation and incentives, and effective long-term city planning), doing more with less (unlocking efficiency by harnessing business expertise, technology and data, deploying private-sector investment, and developing well-executed public-private partnerships), and winning support for change (building a shared long-term vision of the future through deep, sustained interaction between cities and business, supported by stakeholder engagement, consensus and mutual accountability, and quantifiable goals and performance-management systems.)

That is why I have entered into a contract for consultant from Harvard University to assess the entire Office of Planning & Development’s staff, role, and policy in and of entrepreneurship and small businesses. I recognize the need for a more holistic approach to propelling entrepreneurship and business growth in Lawrence. We will focus on supporting entrepreneurs and existing businesses of all kinds to thrive — from vendors and general contractors to food-related and childcare businesses. Such businesses are typically not candidates for venture capital or viewed with the same excitement as tech startups aiming to be the next unicorn. But each is critically important to our community by providing jobs, supporting households, and driving social mobility. Furthermore, with technology and operation support, they could someday become businesses that grow in a big way too. To that end, I will focus on creating a collaborative effort to align resources and support for entrepreneurs and existing small businesses in Lawrence. We will help them with the necessary resources to grow and maximize their opportunities. Lawrence is the place to be for small businesses and entrepreneurs and my administration will pave the way for their success through the recovery and beyond.

As for housing, my administration will focus on meeting the housing needs of our residents as well as welcoming those seeking to live in our vibrant community. As housing costs rise and homeownership becomes more and more unreachable for many, we will create new funding

support for homebuyers as well as the creation of new affordable, workforce and market housing. I am dedicated to building the wealth of our residents through homeownership as well as the entrepreneurial and business support. At the same time, Lawrence’s future is dependent on developing new housing opportunities for our future generations as well as those seeking to move here. My administration will create a fund with the participation of financial institutions and other partners to support these initiatives.

As you know, a grant was suddenly found, and is being used, to update the City’s classification & compensation plan through the University of Massachusetts – Collins Center. We hope to receive that report in the incoming months and prepare not only that packet for your approval, but also make those changes reflect in this year’s budget. In the past there have been some changes to the 2005 classification of positions, but the plan and the salary scale remains in the year 2005. Since then, every union has received salary increases, and although the COLA over several years have been insufficient to catch up to the salaries, the non-union employees have received no salary increases in their salary chart. Only very few have had their salary increased in their own positions grade pay scale.

The work, of former Personnel Director Bonet of his written proposal to the City in 2014, and other former employees fight against a civil service federal decree in court, helped Lawrencians that were being affected by the 1973 federal decree to have better opportunities to be selected for public safety positions in Lawrence. That change has really had a positive effect on crime. Chief Vasque and his team of law enforcement leader who have taken these young Lawrencians and provided the best training and assignments. Chief Vasque has reconstructed the police department into a truly professional team, a team that knows the culture, the language, its people, its streets, its issues, etc. His work has taken Lawrence into an era in which it has seen the lowest amount of crime ever! Crime in the year 2020 was low, but it was mostly because many businesses and places were shut down due to the pandemic. Through new recruitments, new and better equipment, vehicles, and increases in community policing, it will guarantee that the city maintain low crime rate throughout our neighborhood now and in the near future.

Last month, the city hired seven additional police officer recruits. Six individuals are assigned to the NECCo police academy, while one is assigned to the Reading Police Academy. However, what will see in the near future is



## Now it’s the PEOPLE’S TURN!

an exodus of senior and young law enforcement officers from the Lawrence Police Department. There are a number of reasons this will occur, including senior retirements, better and more prestigious law enforcement opportunities for the young police officers in state and federal agencies, and seeking other places to work. So, my office, as well as the City’s Personnel Department, will need to be in full steam to support and process many new Lawrence recruits. I ask that anyone having a hand on this recruitment process provide the upmost priority service to continue the uninterrupted security of, and for, our residents.

In addition to continue the task of including our youth into programs, I will be asking the Workforce Investment Board to explore and research educational programs that will allow our youth with decision making of entering into a trade. As many know, trades are in high demand as the need for more experienced labor employees continues to grow. Trade careers are typically known to be more stable and require technical ability. It is these technical abilities that I am asking the WIB to seek funds in order to provide today’s youth in types of trades such as Mechanical, Construction, Industrial, Medical, Culinary Arts, and more.

While four-year college students are still in the classroom, trade skill students are graduates, and earning an income, after about two years in the classroom. Skilled trade experts make a good living. A huge need for master tradespeople exists. Earning a college degree isn’t a bad idea, but it’s not for everyone. Trade careers give you practical and useful skills, incur less student loan debt, and allows you to earn experience and an education. Plus, trades are always in demand.

I’ve asked the council for funding to support several consultant costs. One such project is to compose a committee of stakeholders, and with the professional technical skills of a higher educational learning institution, project the peoples voice (of words) into a plan so that the city may present to DESE, in our attempts

to return schools to the control of the voters. The last three administrations have not created a plan to do so. The current LPS turnaround plans have been created previously by a receiver and currently by a board composed by the Commonwealth. I believe a new governance is required as well as a specific, concrete, and efficient timeline plan created by residents, educators, parents, students, board members, councilmembers, and other stakeholders. I intend to provide that plan for your approval prior to sending to DESE.

In conclusion, this administration has taken and has begun working with our employees to address the cleanliness of our city, repair our roads and sidewalks. Furthermore, emphasize will be in addressing the homelessness, substance abuse, and gang related issues currently affecting the quality of life in our city.

The state of our city is strong. It is sturdy and it has proven to be durable and resilient through tough times. We have proven time and again that by working together, Lawrence can turn obstacles into opportunities. It is the honor of my life to play this role in my remarkable hometown at such a remarkable time. I believe in Lawrence because this city made my immigrant family’s dream come true. Together, we’re going to continue to accomplish remarkable things. We’ll continue to improve core services, we’ll continue to grow our economy, we’ll continue to improve our quality of life, we’ll continue to include everyone in our city’s story. Because now it’s the people turn. Already we are anxious to see the final results of Lawrence’s two new schools and its new police station. These are remarkable accomplishments, and I thank the council the role it chose to make them happen, and for the role they are about to take to continue making it happen.

Thank you for your time today and thank you for the honor of being your mayor. God Bless Lawrence. On behalf of Lawrence and its residents, this is the conclusion of the State of the City. ♦



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SUE PIAZZA’S BOOK REVIEW

Mycroft and Sherlock  
(Mycroft Holmes Book 2)

© 2018 by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Anna Waterhouse  
Published by: Titan Books  
Genre: Fiction, Murder, Mystery  
Bookmarkers: 5 of 5

Basketball Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and screen writer/script consultant Anna Waterhouse are authors of this second book in the Mycroft Holmes Trilogy. Thought book 2, it is a stand-alone book; one does not have to have read the first novel to understand and follow this one.

For anyone not familiar with the Holmes Brothers, the setting for their escapades is London, England; this story takes place in 1872. The Second Opium War with China ended twelve years earlier.

Bizarre murders plague London once again. Police are not vigilant in solving the murders, almost all the victims (six of seven) are Chinese and involved with either the use, sale, or distribution of opium. The subsequent investigation and results are left up to 18-year-old Sherlock and 26-year-old Mycroft. A link between victims, the drug trade, and high society unfolds.

Amidst all the poverty and social decay Mycroft, and fellow adventurer and confidant, Cyrus Douglas, set up a home for wayward boys. Here unfortunates would learn skills to elevate themselves from a life on the streets. The arrival and admittance of two brothers to the “home”, and their subsequent progress help fuel the plot.

This book gives the reader a glimpse into the Holmes brothers early life. In keeping with what they will become, this story gives us a nice fill-in theory of how they came to be the well-known characters Sir Arthur Conan Doyle penned. Sherlock’s drug use is given an explanation and a noble one at that. Mycroft’s history with Queen Victoria is delved into. The insights are nicely done. There is nothing in either the plot or character that goes against anything Doyle created.

Working together and building on one another to create a cohesive

whole are the following several layers, several sub-plots. (1) Race relations and discrimination. (2) The Opium Wars and the enormous profits Britain reaped as a result of the growth and sale of this narcotic. (3) The anger the Chinese felt about the destruction of their people and their land. (4) Addiction, public and private (Sherlock). (5) The plight of the less fortunate. (6) Matters of the realm. (7) National and international finance. The topics touched upon go from these to the more mundane of life’s matters such as (8) advancement in one’s professional life.

As in any good Sir Arthur Conan Doyle novel, items sprinkled throughout are, at that moment, considered to be tidbits but later on are determined to be major clues.

Sentences are written and detailed; their descriptions bring to fruition the setting it longed to invoke. Example 1: “...oatmeal-colored sky looking ominous ...” Example 2: “The speculations of an overburdened newspaper reporter, sweating in a darkened cubicle and stinking of pomade, stale cigar smoke and printer’s ink

The words are a joy to read. And, with a Kindle one has the ability to instantly decipher the meaning of obscure words such as “pomade” (which, by the way, is “a scented ointment applied to the hair or scalp). Some words, like “soporific” we don’t readily use but are interesting, especially if one can readily decipher their meaning.

Great for a snowy afternoon at home or a sunny beach day. A quick read even at 480 pages.

I would recommend this book.  
Susan Piazza, a Navy veteran, is an author, columnist, and blogger. Book One in her historical American Indian series is the romance, “A Bird Call That Isn’t”. It can be found on Amazon at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0829MHLRX>

Book 2 is in the editing process and should be out in a few months. For further updates check out her website at: [susanpiazzaauthor.com](http://susanpiazzaauthor.com) Email her. She’d love to hear from you!

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